



YOUTH REHABILITATIVE
SERVICES

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
June 14, 2021

Minutes

In Attendance:

John Stevenson, Director, Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services
Renee Ciconte, Deputy Director, Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services
Angela Porter, DMSS
Judy McCormick
Michelle Darling, DYRS
John Plummer, DYRS
Sean Harris, DYRS
Aileen Fink, Director, Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health
Eric McLaurin, DYRS
Jerrica Boyer, DYRS
Kathleen Covelli-Reyes, CSD
Raheem Perkins, DYRS
Latesha Clarke – Parent Information Center
John Schmidt – Delaware Council on Gambling Problems
Tim Brandau, Community Member

Meeting began with general opening remarks at 9:02AM.

Welcome

Director Mr. John Stevenson welcomed the group. All attendees were introduced.

COVID-19 Update

Director Stevenson reported YRS's COVID19 status. Currently there are no positive staff cases. Additionally, there have been no youth cases contracted in the last few months. At the inception of COVID19, YRS created a Medical Isolation Unit. This unit was based at Stevenson House Detention Center and was responsible for caring for youth who were COVID19 positive until their recovery. Though there were reported youth cases in YRS facilities, none of the youth became concerningly ill. This unit is now closed, as all youth have recovered.

The creation of a vaccine has been very beneficial to operations. The department has created a return to work plan for staff which is now in full implementation. The plan is a hybrid model that will have all staff back in the office by 09/07/2021. Currently many department staff are vaccinated. Early polls did indicate that many facility staff did not plan to vaccinate, as they didn't trust the vaccine. Since that time there were several town halls held to help clarify miss



information. YRS does not know at this time how many staff are vaccinated, as we are not permitted to ask this information.

House Bill 26 and 27

House bills 26 and 27 have been approved and are waiting for the governor's signature. These bills will close the Young Criminals Offender Program (YCOP) at the Department of Corrections (DOC). More than 20 years ago it was decided that kids charged in Superior Court could be held by DOC. There has been a decrease in numbers of kids in YCOP and right now there are none. With the passing of the bill, YRS will have care, custody, and control of all of these youth. Youth cannot be moved to DOC until 18 years of age.

YRS is preparing additional security measures and exploring programming options, as these youth have sentences that are longer than our standard 6 month sentence. YRS will begin serving these youth by January 2022. Housing for the youth has not been determined yet, however, YRS will maintain the ability to decide where they are housed.

Youth Advocate Program Expansion

The Youth Advocate Program (YAP) is a program for high-risk youth that are planned to transition or have transitioned from a YRS facility into the community. With this program, advocates are assigned to the youth and work with them in school, work, etc. to help transition them back into the community. Previously YAP only worked with youth in New Castle County. The program has been expanded to offer services to youth throughout the state. Additionally, YAP began working with youth 6 weeks prior to their discharge. This has been expanded to working with youth and their families upon entry.

Community Supervision of High-Risk Youth

YRS has been supervising some of our high-risk youth in the community. The Group Violence Intervention initiative is working with stakeholders to identify youth who are high-risk and may be eligible to have the opportunity to get services through DHSS. These youth meet a certain criteria determined by the GVI Committee to be considered high-risk. YRS has stepped up supervision of GPS's for these and others. We now have staff monitoring GPS systems 24/7 since September 2020, especially for these high-risk youth. With the enhanced GPS services, parents will get calls in the middle of the night about their child GPS. It has been observed that this is assisting in increasing family engagement.

Enhanced GPS monitoring has went well and staff are volunteering to work after hours and overnight shifts to continue the monitoring. A new position has been created within YRS dedicated to this service. In addition, SJO officers now carry caseloads to make sure the youth are compliant and stay on track. The goal of the program is to keep those youth safe from themselves and keep the community safe. Our high-risk youth are receiving the attention they need with SJO. Provided a youth is doing well, staying compliant, and making improvements, they can more away from being supervised by the SJO unit.



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PIC Support of Youth and Families

A representative from the Parent Information Center reminded the group that they serve youth and families as well. They offer support for youth from birth to age 21 in a variety of areas, including education. The PIC offers one-one consultations, trainings, webinars, and workshops. For more information or to refer a family, please use the contact information below:

Letesha Clarke – Transition Coordinator
302-999-7394
picofdel.org

Additional Comments

John Schmidt from the Delaware Council on Gambling Problems shared with the group the work they are doing in New Castle County Detention Center. Most recent they hosted a ZOOM presentation to talk about gambling and about other life issues facing our youth. A prior NCCDC resident also spoke during the presentation. The information was well received and there was rich conversation around the topic. The Council plans to return to NCCDC again in June and there is discussion to expand this program to other facilities.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:18AM.

Next Meeting: September 9th, 2019, 9:00AM-11:00AM